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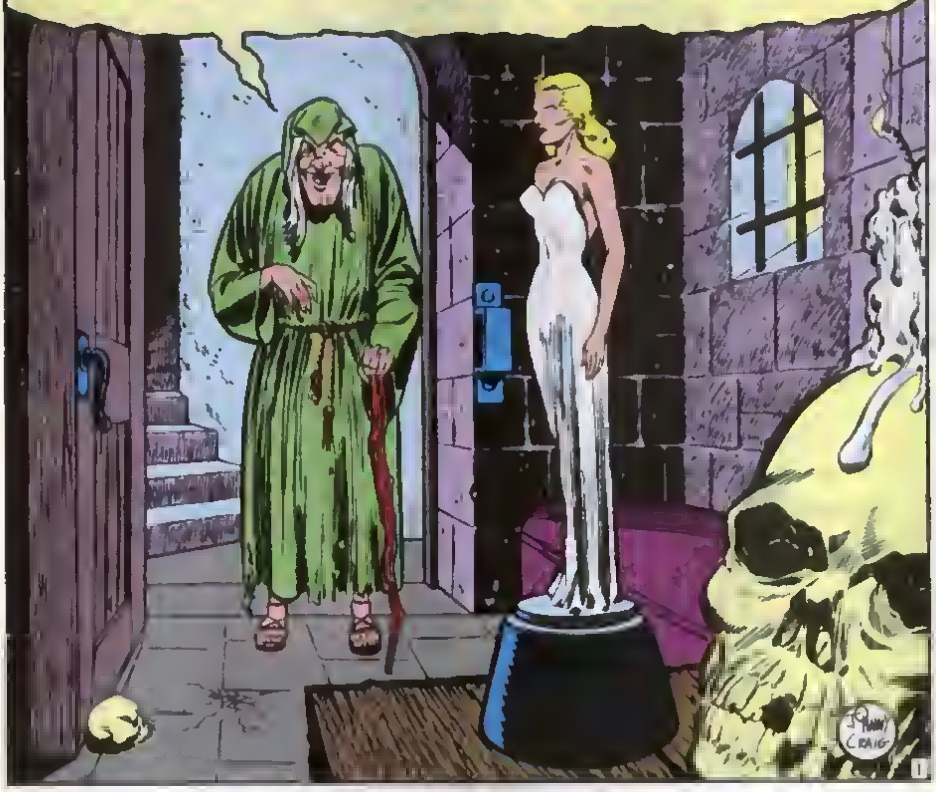
# THE VAULT OF HORROR!

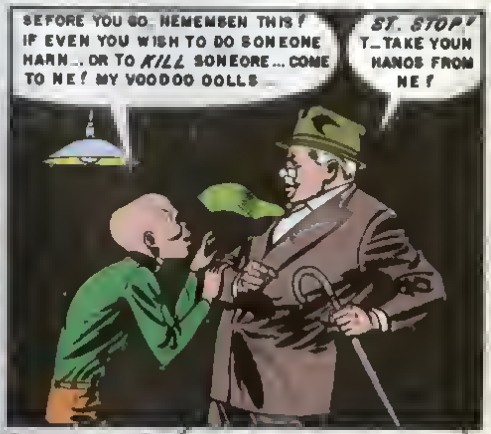
WELCOME, ONCE AGAIN, TO THE VAULT OF HORROR! I SEE WE HAVE MANY *NEW* READERS WITH US THIS TIME! HEH, HEH! I TRUST YOU HAVE PROPERLY PREPARED YOURSELVES! BY THAT I MEAN, YOU *HAVE* MADE SURE *ALL* THE DOORS AND WINDOWS ARE LOCKED, HAVEN'T YOU? FOR, THE TALE I AM ABOUT TO UNFOLD WILL TRULY BE AN INITIATION FOR YOU! YOU OTHER READERS WHO HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE .. READY? HEH, HEH, HEH! GOOD! NOW, LIE BACK IN YOUR GRAVE AND GET A GOOD GRIP ON YOUR NERVES BECAUSE WE ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN THE STORY I CALL:

## VOODOO VENGEANCE!

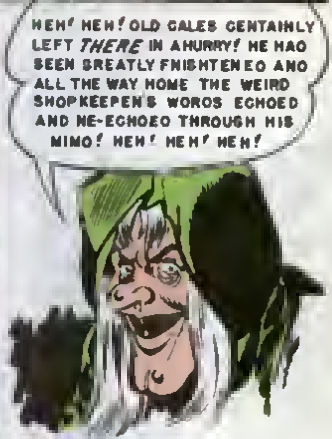


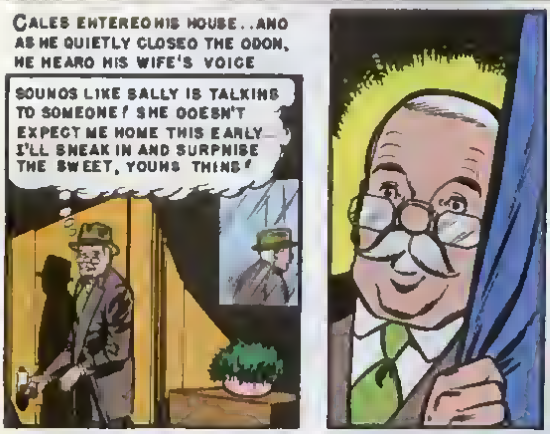
FOR THE PAST THIRTEEN YEARS, GALES STARDISH HAD LEFT HIS PALATIAL SUITE OF OFFICES AT PRECISELY FIVE P.M., AND HAD WALKED ONE BLOCK TO THE GARAGE WHERE HE ALWAYS PARKED HIS CAR, BUT THIS DAY, HE LEFT EARLY...
NOW, THAT'S STRANGE! I'D SWEAR THIS SHOP WASN'T HERE BEFORE! I PASS HERE AT LEAST TWICE A DAY! FUNNY HOW I NEVER NOTICED IT!
ANTIQUES
HMM... ANTIQUES... ODDITIES! SOME NICE THINGS IN THE WINDOW! I THINK I'LL GO IN... MIGHT BE ABLE TO PICK UP SOMETHING NICE FOR SALLY!
I'M LOOKING FOR A GIFT TO GIVE MY WIFE, BUT IT'S SO DARN DARK IN HERE I CAN'T SEE YOUR WARES! COULDN'T WE HAVE A BIT MORE LIGHT?
THE POWERS OF THE DARKNESS, SIR, ARE INFINITE! FHET NOT, FOR I HAVE THAT WHICH YOU SEEK!
HERE, SIR! I THINK YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN THIS... THIS DOLL!
A DOLL? NO! I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND! MAYBE YOU COULD SHOW ME SOMETHING ELSE!
IF YOU DO NOT CARE FOR THIS DOLL, SIR, PERHAPS YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ONE NOT SO ORDINARY! PERHAPS... A VOODOO DOLL! HMMM?
A VOODOO DOLL? WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
A WAX DOLL THAT WILL BE THE EXACT DUPLICATE OF ANYONE YOU NAME! ONLY, EVEN THIS DOLL I SHALL CAST A VOODOO SPELL! AND WHATSOEVER HAPPENS TO THE DOLL, SO SHALL IT ALSO HAPPEN TO THE PERSON IN WHOSE LIKENESS THE DOLL IS MADE!
ROT!
DEATH AND THE

HEH! YOU DISBELIEVE! BUT IT'S TRUE! IN THE PAST I HAVE MADE MANY SUCH DOLLS ..FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT WISH .. AH.. HARM TO ANOTHER!
I .. I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! I.. I THINK I'LL.. I'LL LEAVE!

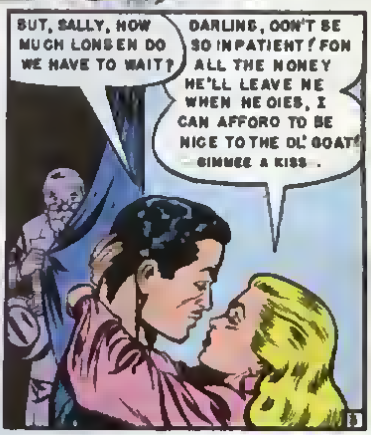

BEFORE YOU GO.. REMEMBER THIS! IF EVEN YOU WISH TO DO SOMEONE HARM ... OR TO KILL SOMEONE ... COME TO ME! MY VOODOO DOLLS ...
ST. STOP! T.. TAKE YOUR HANDS FROM ME!

HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH! REMEMBER WELL MY WORDS, SIR! REMEMBER WELL! HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH! HEH!

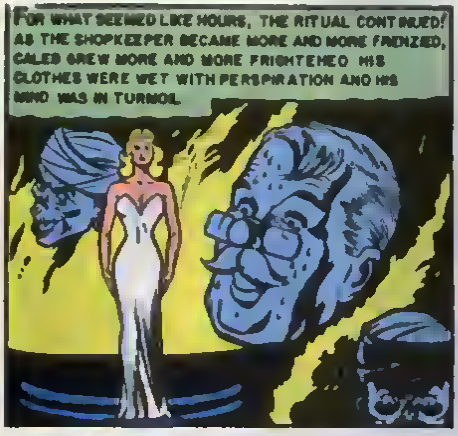

HEH! HEH! OLD GALES CERTAINLY LEFT THERE IN A HURRY! HE HAD BEEN GREATLY FRIGHTENED AND ALL THE WAY HOME THE WEIRD SHOPKEEPER'S WORDS ECHOED AND RE-ECHOED THROUGH HIS MIND! HEH! HEH! HEH!

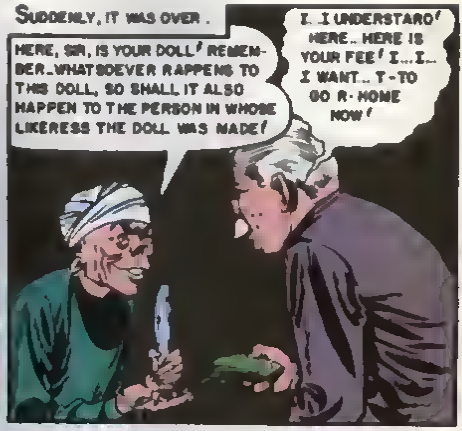

GALES ENTERED HIS HOUSE.. AND AS HE QUIETLY CLOSED THE DOOR, HE HEARD HIS WIFE'S VOICE
SOUNDS LIKE SALLY IS TALKING TO SOMEONE! SHE DOESN'T EXPECT ME HOME THIS EARLY— I'LL SNEAK IN AND SURPRISE THE SWEET, YOUNG THING!




BUT, SALLY, HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO WAIT?
DARLING, DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT! FOR ALL THE MONEY HE'LL LEAVE ME WHEN HE DIES, I CAN AFFORD TO BE NICE TO THE OL' GOAT! —GIMME A KISS..

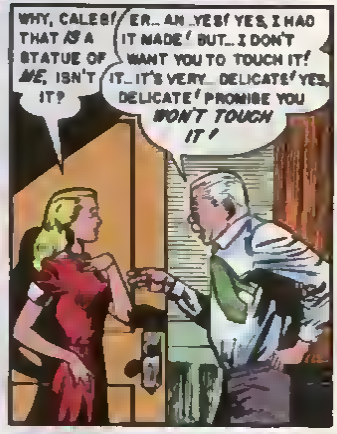
SOB
OH, NO... SALLY... NOT YOU! HOW... HOW *COULD* YOU, SALLY? HOW COULD YOU *DO* THIS TO ME?
SOB!
WITH HIS EYES BRIMMING WITH TEARS, THE BROKEN HEARTED OLD GOAT... ER... OLD MAN LEFT THE HOUSE AND DROVE BACK TO HIS OFFICE!
IT ISN'T RIGHT FOR HER TO HURT ME THIS WAY! IT ISN'T RIGHT! SOB! I WISH I COULD HURT *HER* SOMEHOW! BUT... I CAN'T... I... I STILL *LOVE* HER!
SOMETIME LATER HE PARKED HIS CAR AND WALKED TOWARD HIS OFFICE. SUDDENLY, HE STOPPED...
"IF EVER YOU WISH TO DO SOMEONE HARM, COME TO ME!"
ANTIQ
HEH! HEH! I KNEW YOU WOULD RETURN! YOU WISH ME TO MAKE YOU A *VOODOO DOLL*, DON'T YOU? HEH! WHO IS IT TO BE, SIR? WHO IS IT TO BE?
MY... MY WIFE!
THE NEXT MORNING, CALEB BROUGHT THE SHOPKEEPER PHOTOGRAPHS OF SALLY AND WAS TOLD TO RETURN AT MIDNIGHT! AFTER A NERVE-WRACKING DAY, HE RETURNED TO THE SHOP AND WAS USHERED DOWN INTO THE CELLAR...
SIT THERE, SIR! YOU MUST BE PRESENT WHILE I PERFORM THE *BLACK MAGIC* RITUAL WHICH WILL CHANGE THIS WAX FIGURE INTO A *VOODOO DOLL!*
YES... YES, OF COURSE! P... PLEASE HURRY, WON'T YOU... I... I FEEL QUITE... NERVOUS!
THE SHOPKEEPER BEGAN THE BLACK MAGIC RITUAL. HE CHANTED WEIRD INCANTATIONS AND DANCED BEFORE THE DOLL... AND CALEB SAT WATCHING
4

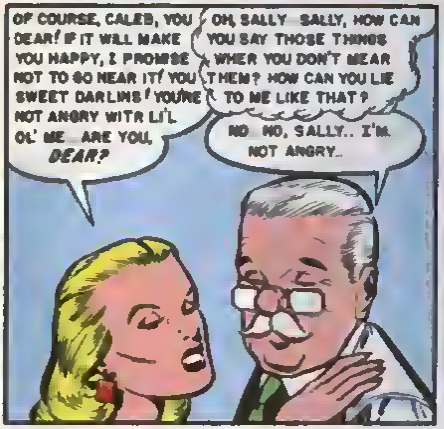

FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE HOURS, THE RITUAL CONTINUED! AS THE SHOPKEEPER BECAME MORE AND MORE FRENZIED, CALEB GREW MORE AND MORE FRIGHTENED HIS CLOTHES WERE WET WITH PERSPIRATION AND HIS MIND WAS IN TURMOIL.


SUDDENLY, IT WAS OVER.
HERE, SIR, IS YOUR DOLL! REMEMBER..WHATSOEVER HAPPENS TO THIS DOLL, SO SHALL IT ALSO HAPPEN TO THE PERSON IN WHOSE LIKERESS THE DOLL WAS MADE!
I..I UNDERSTAND! HERE.. HERE IS YOUR FEE! I...I... I WANT... T-TO GO H-HOME NOW!

CALEB LEFT THE ANTIQUE SHOP AND WENT HOME HE SLEPT FITFULLY, BUT REKT DAY HE AWOKE RESTED AND COMPOSED..
I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD! I..I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT REALLY HAPPENED! BUT THERE IS THE WAX DOLL TO PROVE IT! I.. I WONDER IF WHAT HE SAID ABOUT IT IS TRUE! I...I MUST FIND OUT!

GOOD MORNING, CALEB! OH.. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL STATUE! AND.. WHY, IT'S A.. A STATUE OF ME!
DON'T TOUCH THAT!


WHY, CALEB! THAT IS A STATUE OF ME, ISN'T IT?
ER.. AH..YES! YES, I HAD IT MADE! BUT... I DON'T WANT YOU TO TOUCH IT! IT..IT'S VERY.. DELICATE! YES, DELICATE! I PROMISE YOU WON'T TOUCH IT!


OF COURSE, CALEB, YOU DEAR! IF IT WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY, I PROMISE NOT TO GO NEAR IT! YOU SWEET DARLING! YOU'RE NOT ANGRY WITH LI'L OL' ME.. ARE YOU, DEAR?
OH, SALLY.. SALLY, HOW CAN YOU SAY THOSE THINGS WHEN YOU DON'T MEAN THEM? HOW CAN YOU LIE TO ME LIKE THAT?
NO.. NO, SALLY.. I'M NOT ANGRY..

THAT'S GOOD! OH!.. THERE'S THE PHONE! I'LL BET IT!
ALL RIGHT, SALLY! I'LL JUST PUT THE STATUE UP HERE ON THE SHELF.. OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

DARLING, YOU CAN'T COME TODAY! MY HUSBAND'S HOME! ...YES, I'LL MEET YOU TONIGHT! SAME PLACE...YES!...YES, OF COURSE I LOVE YOU.. NOW, GOOD-BYE...
?
THE CHEAT! THE LIAR! IF SHE THINKS SHE'S GOING TO MEET HER LOVER TONIGHT, SHE'S MISTAKEN! I'LL STOP HER... BUT HOW? HOW.. WAIT! THE VOODOO DOLL!
WILL IT WORK? I WONDER!...BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN STOP HER! I'LL...I'LL TRY IT! I'LL...I'LL JUST..
..SCRATCH THE STATUE'S ARM... LIKE THIS!
EEEEEEEK
THE SCREAM SHOCKED CALEB INTO ACTION! QUICKLY PUTTING THE DOLL BACK ON ITS SHELF, HE RAN TO THE KITCHEN..
SALLY! SALLY, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
CALEB! DO SOMETHING! CALL THE DOCTOR! I JUST CUT MY ARM WITH THIS BUTCHER KNIFE! IT'S BLEEDING TERRIBLY! DO SOMETHING!
CUT YOURSELF?.. GOOD HEAVENS! HE WAS RIGHT! IT.. IT WORKS!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU IDIOT! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BLEEDING! GET A DOCTOR!
AFTER THE DOCTOR HAD BANDAGED SALLY'S ARM, HE GAVE HER A SLEEPING PILL, AND LEFT NATURALLY, SHE DIDN'T MEET HER BOY-FRIEND THAT NIGHT, BUT CALEB WASN'T AS HAPPY AS YOU AS MIGHT EXPECT!
IT'S AMAZING! WITH THIS DOLL I HOLD SALLY'S LIFE IN MY HANDS! IT'S...IT'S WEIRD! I'M ALMOST AFRAID OF IT!
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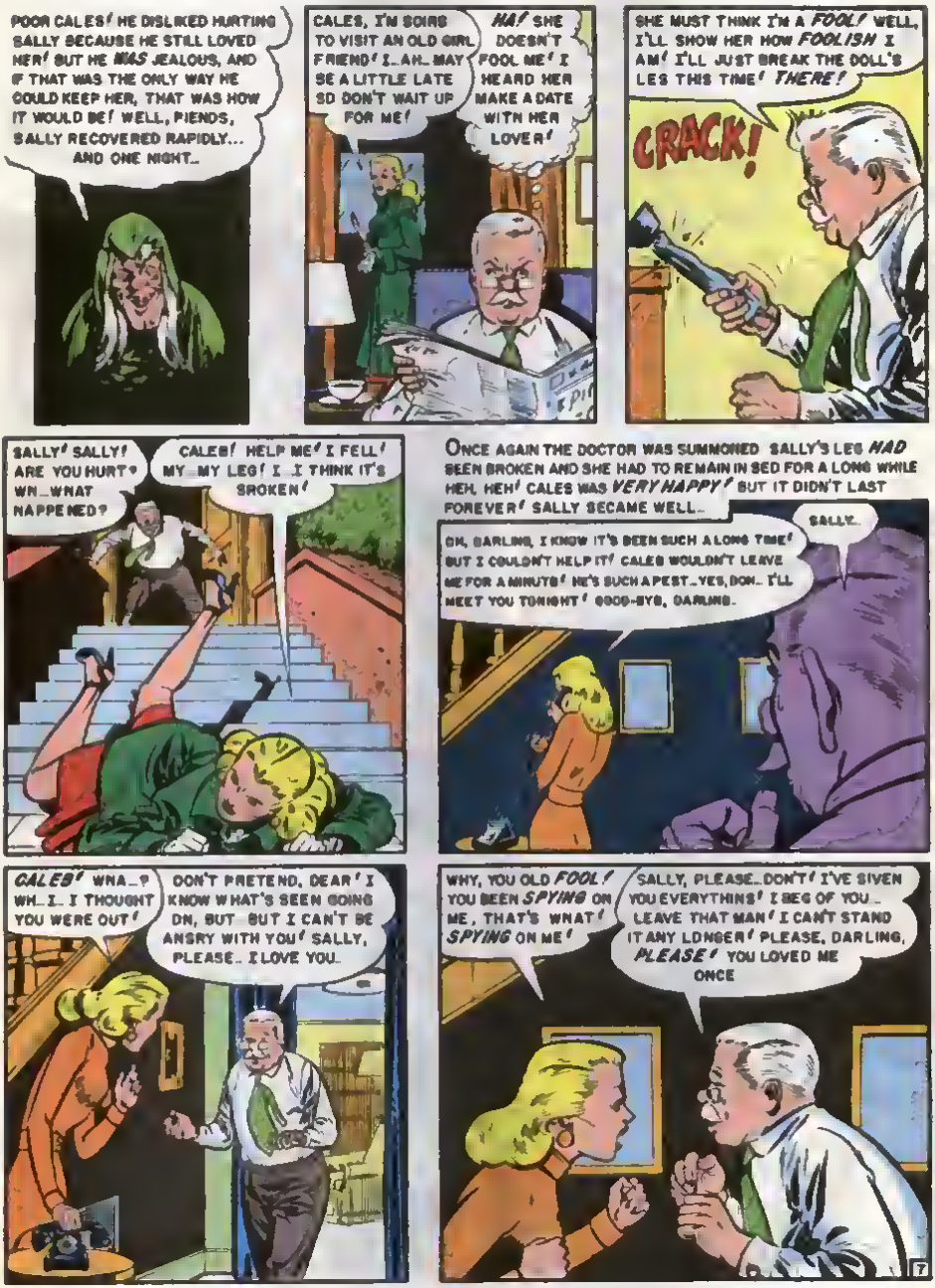
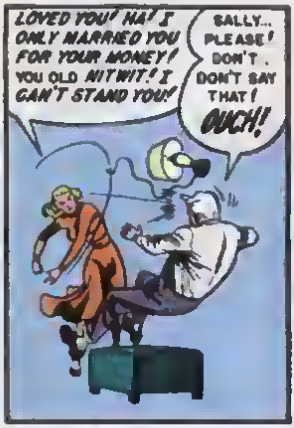
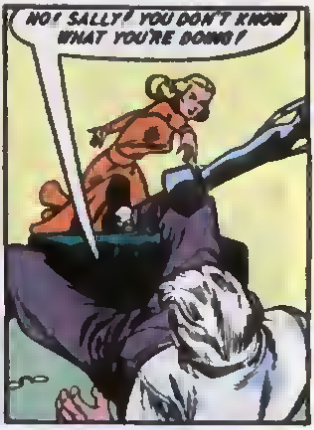
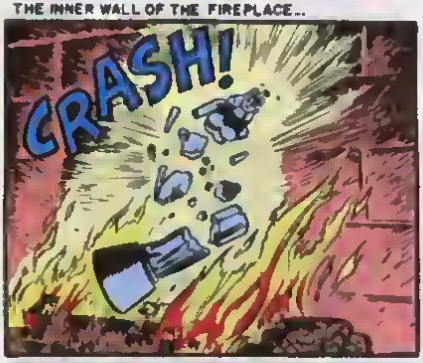

POOR CALES! HE DISLIKED HURTING SALLY BECAUSE HE STILL LOVED HER! BUT HE WAS JEALOUS, AND IF THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD KEEP HER, THAT WAS HOW IT WOULD BE! WELL, FIENDS, SALLY RECOVERED RAPIDLY... AND ONE NIGHT...
CALES, I'M GOING TO VISIT AN OLD GIRL FRIEND! I...AH... MAY BE A LITTLE LATE SO DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME!
HA! SHE DOESN'T FOOL ME! I HEARD HER MAKE A DATE WITH HER LOVER!
SHE MUST THINK I'M A FOOL! WELL, I'LL SHOW HER HOW FOOLISH I AM! I'LL JUST BREAK THE DOLL'S LES THIS TIME! THERE!
CRACK!
SALLY! SALLY! ARE YOU HURT? WH...WHAT HAPPENED?
CALES! HELP ME! I FELL! MY...MY LEG! I...I THINK IT'S BROKEN!
ONCE AGAIN THE DOCTOR WAS SUMMONED SALLY'S LEG HAD BEEN BROKEN AND SHE HAD TO REMAIN IN BED FOR A LONG WHILE HEH, HEH! CALES WAS VERY HAPPY! BUT IT DIDN'T LAST FOREVER! SALLY BECAME WELL...
SALLY...
OH, DARLING, I KNOW IT'S BEEN SUCH A LONG TIME! BUT I COULDN'T HELP IT! CALES WOULDN'T LEAVE ME FOR A MINUTE! HE'S SUCH A PEST...YES, DON... I'LL MEET YOU TONIGHT! GOOD-BYE, DARLING.
CALES! WHA...? WH...I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT!
DON'T PRETEND, DEAR! I KNOW WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON, BUT BUT I CAN'T BE ANGRY WITH YOU! SALLY, PLEASE.. I LOVE YOU..
WHY, YOU OLD FOOL! YOU BEEN SPYING ON ME, THAT'S WHAT! SPYING ON ME!
SALLY, PLEASE...DON'T! I'VE GIVEN YOU EVERYTHING! I BEG OF YOU... LEAVE THAT MAN! I CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER! PLEASE, DARLING, PLEASE! YOU LOVED ME ONCE
7

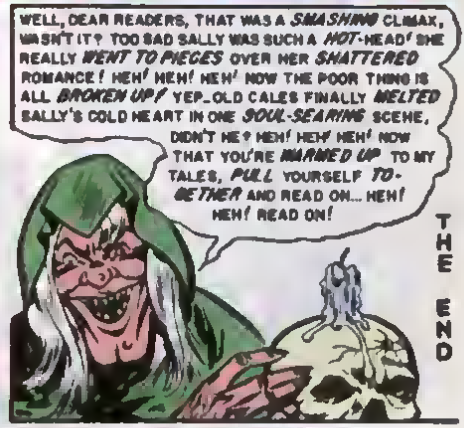


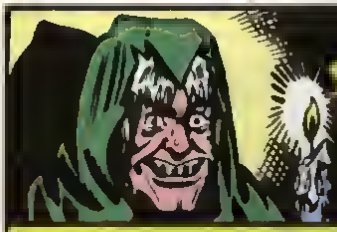



HIS FACE CONTORTED IN STARK TERROR, CALES COULD ONLY WATCH HELPLESSLY AS THE WAX IMAGE OF SALLY SAILED OVER HEAD AND STRUCK THE INNER WALL OF THE FIREPLACE...




THE PIECES FELL ON THE BURNING LOGS...THE LICKING FLAMES LEAPED AROUND THEM... AND THEY BEGAN TO MELT





# THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Mr. Vault-Keeper,

I would very much like it if you would send me a picture of your slimy self. I always read your comics on the bus ride home because I'm the last one off. The tale I liked best is "The Mask of Horror" in [RCP VAULT #5]. I only have two books. And I also like to draw pictures of the three storytellers, The Old Witch, The Crypt-Keeper and my favorite one, The Vault-Keeper.

Jesse Ryan Deering
Omer, MI

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I just wanted to ask for your picture, but as long as I am here I guess I'll tell you some things, like my fave mag is yours. I just recently got a subscription to all of the horror mags. My fave story is "The Mask of Horror" [in RCP VAULT #5].

Alan
Besthalta, IL

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I love your comics. I am your biggest fan. I have The VAULT OF HORROR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 10. Did you ever think about getting your own show like "Tales from the Crypt?" It would be really cool if you did. Could you send me an autograph?

Blaise Caroleo
Staten Island, NY

**See there, HBO! My picture they want, my autograph they want! Amicus that I was star-material. I'll even pay for the puppet-rod implants (CK says they're tax deductible)!**
**—VK**

Dear VK,

I just want to say that EC comics are the best. I buy every issue. My favorite tale is from [RCP VAULT #3], "Graft In Concrete!," another favorite is from [RCP CRYPT #5] "Squarsh...Anyone?" There's a certain tale I've been dying to read, could you tell me what upcoming issue it will be in, or if there is one? It's called "Dead Wait."

Billy Ray Price
Meridian, MS

**"Dead Wait!" appeared in VAULT OF HORROR #23, which will be our VAULT #12, and I told the tale, so you know it's good! If you can't wait, it's also in Gladstone's VAULT #4 (see our ad elsewhere this ish). So, if you're dying to read it, you can chose between a slow death or a fast one. Decisions, decisions. Squarsh?**
**—VK**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I could remember back when I saw this movie about this girl who would draw monsters and they would come to life and do what her drawing showed. Since then I love anything to do with horror. I would see many movies and watch many, many horror shows on TV. One day I went to my local newsstand and noticed a comic book that said VAULT OF HORROR. I picked it up and looked at it. It was worth every penny. I wanted to read it so bad, but when I got home I had to cut the grass. The book was on my mind during the 1½ hour period. It soon was dark which made a perfect environment. I had my soda pop and chips ready as I read. It was great!

I have been doing my own comic books. Although my drawing ability is not yet perfect, nor my tales either, when I'm down I read some CRYPTs and VAULTs.

John Hempstead, age 17
Struthers, OH

**What a charming scene of domestic life, what a typical, Theodore Cleaver picture of chores, snacks & delayed pleasure. . .**

**How disgusting! This is 90s, kiddo; immediate gratification and hedonistic pleasure up to your ears! My kinda town!**
**—VK**

**[Don't let VK discourage you, John. Sounds great to us!]**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

What's up? I was reading your issue #2, and the stories are so wild. They keep you in suspense through the whole story. Some are switched around, you think someone did it, and the other person really did it. I like the way you do that. I love reading the comics at night. Keep it up.

Rich Armes
Kankakee, IL

**Hey, Rich, I consider it a vote of confidence that, altho you don't know what I've got up, you want me to keep it there!**
**—VK**

MORE AFTER "RATS HAVE SHARP TEETH!"

The tingling air and the gleaming snow-capped peaks of the Carpathian mountains attract vacationers from all over the world! Trudging up the flank of the Craggborn is a little group of climbers...

From a little village in the southern part of Transylvania... *Viktor Zorak*...

And from America, honeymooning in this romantic setting... *John and Edna Farnum*...

And the English brothers... students, enjoying their summer freedom from classes at Oxford... *Reggie and Eric Smythe*...

THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WILL FOLLOW THEIR GRIZZLED GUIDE, THE ROUMANIAN *JAN BODZLA*, INTO THE ADVENTURE AND EXCITEMENT THEY SEEK. THEY KNOW THEY FACE *DANGER*, BUT HOW CAN THEY KNOW OF THE *HORROR* THEY WILL MEET WHEN *TERROR STRIKES* IN THE FORM OF A...

WEREWOLF

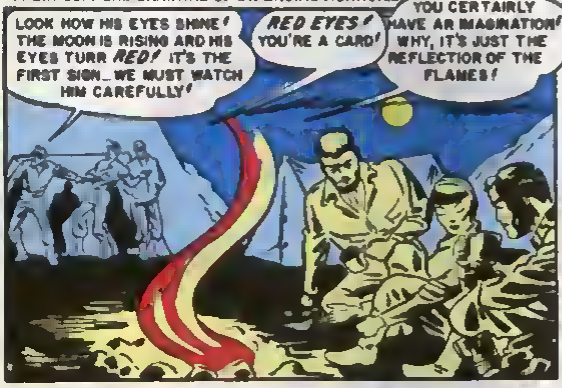
THERE IT IS! THE LODGE WHERE WE WILL REST THIS NIGHT! TOMORROW WE SHALL CONTINUE THE CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE CRAGGHORN!

OH-H-H! NO ONE MUST HEAR ME, MH FAHHUM! I MUST WARN YOU OF SOMETHING... *HORRIBLE!*

IT'S HE! VICTOR ZORAK! I THINK HE'S A... WEREWOLF!
RIDICULOUS, MAN! YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THOSE OLD SUPERSTITIONS, DO YOU? WHY, ZORAK SEEMS LIKE A NICE GUY!
BUT THERE ARE SIGNS... UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS! L-LOOK AT THE HAIR ON THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS! AND HIS EYES... THE EYEBROWS MEET IN THE MIDDLE AND HIS RING FINGER... THE SAME LENGTH AS HIS MIDDLE FINGER! A WEREWOLF, I TELL YOU!
WHY HA-HA YOUR OWN EYEBROWS ARE JUST AS SHAGGY! NOW FORGET IT!
WHAT WAS THE OLD CHAP WHISPERING ABOUT, FARNUM? IS THE LODGE HAUNTED OR SOMETHING?
YOU'RE NOT VERY WRONG, SMYTHE! HE SEEMS TO THINK THAT ZORAK IS A... YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS... A WEREWOLF!
YOU MEAN, ZORAK'S LIABLE TO CHANGE INTO A WOLF SOME NIGHT AND TEAR US APART WITH HIS AWFUL FANGS? HE'S JUST KIDDING YOU, WHAT?
I THINK IT BEST IF WE RETIRE IMMEDIATELY! I KNOW YOU'RE ALL ANXIOUS TO LEAVE EARLY TOMORROW, FOR WE HAVE A HARD CLIMB AHEAD OF US!
YES, I'M TERRIBLY TIRED! COME, JOHN DEAR! GOOD-NIGHT ALL!
GOOD-NIGHT!
THAT'S FUNNY! I THOUGHT EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP BY NOW! WONDER WHO'S WANDERING AROUND AT THIS HOUR? GUESS I'LL TAKE A LOOK!
SQUEEEK!
YAAHH!

WHA...WHAT ASE YOU DOIRS? YOU CESTAIRLT SCASED NE!
YOU THINH I'M AR OLD FOOL... BUT I NUST TAKE PRECAUTIORS!
SILVES CROSSES! ONE FOS EACH WINDOW, ANS ONE FOS EACH OF US TO WEAS' HESE! IT IS ALL THAT WILL PROTECT YOU?
ARS THESE.. FOR THE DOORS! THE WOLFSBANE BLOOMS TRIS TIME OF YEAR, ANS THE WERE-WOLVES HOWL WHEN THEY SMELL IT! THIS WILL HEEP HIM AWAY!
GARLIC! W ARY-ONE'S MAD AROUND HESE, IT'S YOU! THIS MEDIEVAL STUFF IS STUPID! I JUST WON'T HEAR ANYNORE! GOOD-NIGHT!
BUT JAN BODZLA WAS WARY... ANS WHILE THE OTHERS SLEPT HE SILENTLY STOOD SUASD...
TOMORROW NIGHT THERE WILL BE A FULL MOON! TREN THE CURSED THING WILL SUSELT ASSUNE IT'S HORRIBLE FORN!
BUT PESHAPS IT WAS JAN'S ANCIENT RITUAL, PESHAPS THERE REALLY WAS NO WESEWOLF, BUT THE HIGHT PASSED QUIETLY INTO THE DAWN! REASSURING SUNLIGHT FINDS THE SROUP VERY ANXIOUS TO START ON THE TRAIL...
IT IS LOVELY, ISN'T IT? I CAN'T WAIT TO REACH THE TOP!
OH, MR SMYTHE, I DO HOPE WE MAKE THE SUMMIT!
UP THE WEST SLOPE OF THE IMPOSING TOWES OF STONE! CLOSER, CLOSER TO... WHAT...?
LISTEN, OLD MAN, YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T TELL THOSE SILLY OLD STORIES, YOU MIGHT SCARE MRS. FASNUM!
BUT IT'S TSUE! SEWASE TRE COMING HIGHT! AT THE TIME OF THE FULL MOON, TRE WESEWOLF WILL STALH INROCENT VICTIMS FOS HIS INHUMAN PLEASURES!
SH-H-H! HERE ARE THE OTHERS! FORGET THOSE HORROR TALES FOR AWHILE, WHAT SAY?
YOU WILL SEE... YOU WILL SEE! BUT NOW, IT IS TIME TO MAHE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT!

THE MOON APPEARS IN THE DARKENING SKY AS THE CLIMBERS EAT THEIR SUPPER... UNAWARE OF IMPENDING HORROR...



WE CAN'T WORRY ASOUT HIM NOW... C'MON! LET'S SPREAD OUT! BE CAREFUL...AND IF YOU SEE ANYTHING... SHOOT TO KILL!
NO. WAIT! THOSE BULLETS ARE NO GOOD! WAIT!
WE CAN'T WAIT!
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED OW! WHA...
OVER HERE! I'VE FOUND HER! HURRY!
I TRIPPED OVER SOMETHING AND THERE...
UGG-GGH! IT'S... HORRIBLE! SHE MUST HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY AN... ANIMAL!
YES... A HUNGRY ANIMAL! A... WEREWOLF! YOU BELIEVE ME, NOW!
NOTHING ELSE WILL KILL THE WEREWOLF BUT THESE SILVER BULLETS! AND THEY ARE BLESSED... I MADE THEM FROM THE CROSSES! I MELTED THEM AT THE LODGE LAST NIGHT!
HIS TRACKS...THEY'RE WOLF TRACKS! THEY HEAD UPWARDS! HE'S CLIMBING TO THE PEAK! THIS IS THE ONLY WAY DOWN... WE HAVE HIM TRAPPED!
WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE POOR FARNUM HERE...
NO! GONNA.. MY WIFE! I WANT TO... KILL HIM! I'LL GET... WHATEVER UNHOLY THING IT IS!

THE LOATHSOME BEAST LED THEM STEALTHILY ON, SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS HERE... DARTING INTO THE MOONLIGHT THERE! HE EVADED THE HUNTERS, AND LED THEM UP... UP...
THERE HE IS! AFTER HIM!
I SEE HIM! AT THE TOP!
LET ME AT HIM!
I CAN'T SHOOT! FARNUM, GET OUT OF THE WAY!
YOU FILTHY... BEAST! I'LL KILL YOU!
GRRR
BANG
YOU GOT HIM! NICE GOING, JAN!
IS ANYONE HURT? FARNUM... SMYTHE! YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S NOT SERIOUS, JAN, LUCKILY! JUST MY ARM... HE BIT ME!
I JUST GOT A SCRATCH! YOU GOT HIM JUST IN TIME!
MY LEG... THOSE SHARP CLAWS! BUT IT'S NOT BAD!
S-BUT... DON'T YOU KNOW? THOSE WHOM THE WEREWOLF BITES... OR SCRATCHES... ARE CONTAMINATED! NOTHING CAN SAVE THEM FROM THIS HIDEOUS FATE! THE WEREWOLF'S VICTIMS... BECOME...

WEREWOLVES!
THE END

THEY LAY IN THEIR COFFINS, THE QUIET DEAD OF OLD AND HAUGHTY CAPE COLONY. ON THEIR BONEY FINGERS THEY WORE THEIR RINGS, AND JEWELS SPARKLED AROUND THEIR WITHERED NECKS AND ARMS. SEEKING THIS FORGOTTEN LOOT CAME ABNER TUCKER... MERCILESS TO ANYTHING THAT STOOD IN HIS PATH... FORGETTING IN HIS GREED... THAT...

# RATS HAVE SHARP TEETH!

JUST.. A RAT.' THEY'VE HOREYCONGED THIS PLACE WITH THEIR BURROWS AHO NESTS' WHEWWW.. SURE GAVE ME A START' I.. I THOUGRT SHE WAS STIRRING IN THERE.. SITTING UP'
AHH.. TRERE BRE IS' THE LOVELY MISS LAOY OEAN.. WITH ALL NER EMERALOS' HER EMERALOS...? MY EMERALOS, NOW'
AND HERE THEY ARE.. JUST AS THAT OLD HISTORY I FOUND SAID' REAL EMERALDS, ALL RIGHT' A FORTUNE IN JEWELS' ALL MINE.. JUST LIKE THE REST OF THE THINGS THIS GRAVEYARD HOLDS'
YES, THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING' IN MY ROLE AS HISTORIAN I HAVE ACCESS TO OLD RECORDS.. OLD BURIAL RECORDS AND DIARIES' THIS WHOLE GRAVEYARD.. MUST HOLD HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF VALUABLES SOMEDAY.. I'LL BE RICH'
WHA.. WHAT WAS THAT? I HEARD SOMETHING...? GULPS A.. A POLICEMAN'
IF.. IF ANYONE EVER SAW ME DIGGING UP THOSE GRAVES, I'D GO TO JAIL' AND I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPER' I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY THINK UP SOME WAY.. TO DIG UP THOSE GRAVES WITHOUT.. RISK OF DISCOVERY'
SOME AFTERNOONS LATER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF THE COLONIAL GRAVEYARD
ABRER, THE COMMITTEE RAS PASSED ON YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE VACANT POST OF CARETAKER' YOU HAVE THE JOB'
THANK YOU, SIR. THANK YOU

ASNER TUCKER WADE NIS HOME IN THE OLD MANSION WHICH WAS NOW A PART OF THE GNAVE-YAND ' AT NIGHT HE PONED OVER OLD PLANS AND BLUEPNINTS
ACCONDING TO THIS OLD PRINT, THERE'S A SECRET ENTNANCE FNOM THE CELLAN INTO THE TUNNELS GENEATH THE GNAVEYARD!
THEY USED THOSE TUNNELS DURING THE REVOLUTION ... TO SMUGGLE SPIES IN AND OUT .. THEN OUNING THE CIVIL WAN TO NELP SLAVES ESCAPE UP NORTH
THIS MUST BE... OOYYYAAAA!
THOSE RATS GAVE ME A SCANE! BLASTED THINGS! I'LL NAVE TO GET RID OF THEM... SOMEHOW!
DOWN, DOWN A WOODEN STAIRCASE ROTTED WITH AGE AND INTO THE EARTHEN TUNNELS WENT ASNER TUCKEN ' AND EVERYWHERE THAT HE WENT...
RATS' HUNDNEDS OF THEM ... THOUSANDS ' THEY'RE ALL OVEN THE PLACE '
THENE'S A GNAVE RIGHT ABOUT NERE ' I'LL JUST GET IN A LITTLE WORK TONIGHT, NAVE EVERYTHING READY FOR TOMORROW!...
AND AS ASNER TUCKER WONKED AND SWEATED, CRUEL, LITTLE GLITTERING EYES WATCHED HIS EVENY MOVE FOR ASNER TUCKER WAS AN ENEMY .. TO THE RATS!
I OUGHT TO BE INSIDE THE COFFIN-CHAMBER FAINLY SOON...

AT LAST! HERE IT IS! THE GRAVE OF RICH OLD MARCUS LEE! HE WAS BURIED WITH HIS MONEYBELT STILL ON HIM!
THERE! THERE'S THE BELT. STUFFED WITH GOOD GOLD COINS! HOW HEAVY IT FEELS! BUT THAT'S BECAUSE... GOLD IS HEAVY!
NICE YELLOW GOLD! ENOUGH HERE TO MAKE ME RICH! BUT THERE'S MORE TO COME! I'LL LEAVE THE BELT HERE TONIGHT I MUST HAVE A SAFE HIDING PLACE FOR IT... UP ABOVE!
ALL THE NEXT DAY, ABNER TUCKER WENT ABOUT HIS TASKS WITH IMPATIENCE THAT RIGHT, AS HE WENT ALONG THE TUNNEL AND INTO THE RIFLED GRAVE OF MARCUS LEE...
THE MONEYBELT GONE!
THOSE RATS TOOK IT! I CAN SEE THE MARKS... WHERE THEY DRAGGED IT ALONG THE TUNNEL! THEY STOLE MY MONEY!
STEAL MY THINGS, WILL YOU? I'LL TEACH YOU, YOU FILTHY LITTLE BEASTS! IT'S WAR YOU WANT, IS IT? ALL RIGHT! FROM NOW ON... YOU ALL DIE!
YOU DIE! HA! HA! HA! YOU HEAR ME, YOU... YOU THINGS? YOU DIE! NOBODY STEALS ABNER TUCKER'S GOLD FROM HIM...
4

NEXT DAY, ABNER TUCKER WORKED LIKE A MAN POSSESSED. HE BUILT TRAPS.
THEY'LL LEARN WHAT A MAN CAN DO! THEY'LL LEARN BY DYING!
HE POISONED MEAT, AND CUT IT INTO TINY CHUNKS. AT NIGHT HE WALKED THE TUNNELS, DROPPING THE DEADLY FOOD.
HA! HA! HA! COME AND GET IT, YOUR DINNER! HA! HA! DEADLY DINNER
DAY AFTER DAY, RATS DIED BY THE TIME HUNDREDS! NOW, WHEN HE WALKED THE TUNNELS, THERE WERE FEW OF THEM TO BE SEEN! BUT ABNER TUCKER WAS NOT SATISFIED.
THERE! THIS WIRE BARRIER WILL KEEP THEM DOWN AT THE FAR END OF THE TUNNEL. NOW I CAN DIG ALL I WANT. AND THEY CAN'T GET AT MY TREASURES!
NOW I CAN REALLY CONCENTRATE ON MY JOB! THE NEXT GRAVE TO BE OPENED IS THAT OF GAFFER PONDLEBY. HE WAS AN OLD MISER... WHO HAD HIS FORTUNE BURIED WITH HIM!
NOW TRY TO STEAL MY GOLD! TRY! TRY! YOU'RE PENNED IN THERE!
BY DAY, ABNER TUCKER PORED OVER THE OLD GRAVEYARD PLANS AS HE ATE HIS LUNCH
AFTER I OPEN PONDLEBY'S GRAVE, I'LL GET TO WORK ON YOUNG SQUIRE JACKSON'S! HE HAD A COLLECTION OF GOLD RINGS THAT WAS BURIED WITH HIM...
HIS GRAVE IS FURTHER THAN I THOUGHT! I'LL HAVE TO SHORE UP THIS TUNNEL WITH WOODEN BEAMS, TO KEEP IT FROM COLLAPSING!
5

AS HE ATE, ABNER TUCKER WAS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE THAT HIS ENEMIES, THE RATS, WERE FURIOUSLY WORKING AWAY BELOW HIM...
ONCE FREE, THE RODENTS RACED FOR THE TUNNEL ON WHICH ABNER TUCKER HAD SO FUNDUSLY LAVISHED THEIR QUICK WHITE TEETH GNAWED AT THE WOODEN SEAMS THAT SUPPORTED THE WALLS OF THE PONDLESS TUNNEL.
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, ABNER TUCKER WORKED AWAY, IN THE DIM LIGHT, HE NEVER NOTICED THE SLOW, STEADY WEAKENING OF THE SEAMS UNTIL ONE NIGHT A WEEK LATER...
AT LAST! LOOK AT HIS GOLD! HIS MONEYBAGS! HIS JEWELS! THERE MUST BE CLOSE TO FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN HERE!
SO EXCITED WAS HE THAT HE DID NOT HEAR THE SHARP CLICKING OF GNAWING TEETH...
A SEAM WEAKENED BY THE GNAWING AND THE WEIGHT OF UNTOLD TONS OF DIRT... CRACKED! ANOTHER CRACKED!
WHAT'S THAT? WHAT IS IT? OHHHH! THE TUNNEL IS CAVING IN!
THE RATS! THEY'VE GNAWED AWAY THE TUNNEL SUPPORTS! MY SHOVEL IS UNDER TONS OF...
NO... NO... NO! I'LL BE BURIED ALIVE... DOWN HERE... I CAN'T DIG OUT WITH MY BARE HANDS... NO... NO... THE AIR WON'T LAST LONG... I'LL BE SUFFOCATED... BURIED!
TWENTY FEET ABOVE, THE GRAVEYARD WAS QUIET. ONLY THE DEAD... AND THE RATS... WERE THERE TO ENJOY THE MOONLIGHT...

Dear V-K,

I like the idea of having hosts for EC comics. In order I like the Crypt-Keeper because he's very funny. Next is the Old Witch who always seems to be stirring up something new in HAUNT. Third, I like YOU because you're such a nice guy.

Scott Kirkpatrick
Cincinnati, OH

**I must be slipping. —VK**

Dear CK, VK, OW,

Recently I read one of your horror comics. I enjoyed it very much. My family went on a trip to Muskegon; we stopped at a gas station, and I bought three of your comics. My whole family likes your comics. I've told my friends about your comics and they are starting to collect them. I've been so delighted with your comics that I thought I'd write.

Tina Montie
Alpena, MI

**'Fess up, you're...the Addams family! —VK**

Dear Russ,

In the past I have purchased six of your EC Libraries. But the one-time outlays of cash for these tremendous hardback books has prevented me from doing so recently. I never bought any of the combination reprint issues I wanted them in order and not mixed together. You must have read my mind.

Your new format is perfect for me. I like the chronological printing, the paper format and lower price, and I like the quarterly frequency.

I would also like to purchase the Pre-Trend ECs. None of these have ever been reprinted in any format that I know of. I also would be purchasing the post-code issues if you reprint them in this format. Thanks for a super product.

Matt Sturm
Cincinnati, OH

**Russ says to say if you DO decide you want hardbacks (ouch, ouch), he's published the entire New Direction (post-code, OUCH) line, and for a short time only you can order the 3-set Pre-Trend books (WAR AGAINST CRIME; CRIME PATROL; SADDLE JUSTICE; GUNFIGHTER; SADDLE ROMANCES; A MOON, A GIRL...ROMANCE and MODERN LOVE) at a special prepublication price; write or call for details (EE-Yowit Now, leggo the arm, Russ, you'll break it. Again.) —VK**

Dear GhouLunatics,

I just wanted to let you know that all the #1 issues of the 32-page ECs arrived in perfect condition. Your packing & shipping department did a careful job, and obviously cares about the condition the comics arrive in.

Although the #1s were ordered as back issues, I did finally order a premium subscription by phone. I don't have a car, so the cost of a subscription is probably equal to or less than round trip bus fare to a comic shop 12 times a year, especially now that recent route changes mean that it now takes 2 buses to get to the nearest comic shop. Also, the shop relegates what few ECs they have to the rotating rack. You have heard this before, but my comic shop copy of TWO-FISTED looks like somebody drove a nail through it! All the comic shop people told me how mutilated the comics would be if I subscribed, while theirs would be in perfect condition. It looks like it's the other way around! I now know that if they come from you via a premium subscription, they'll be in perfect condition. I chose the $75 Option #3. As long as they come in a box is all that matters to me. I always thought Calumet was a brand of baking powder.

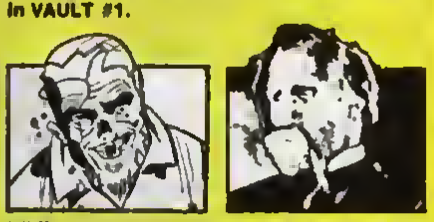
I couldn't help but notice similarities between "Portrait in Wax!" in VAULT #1 and the 1950s Vincent Price movie "House of Wax." Not the plot, but specific details, like corpses disguised as wax statues and a man who covered his scarred face with a wax mask. I wonder if it was just coincidence, or if the writers of the film "borrowed" these ideas from VK.

I'll consider ordering some of the color prints of EC covers. I'm assuming they're the color plates from the hardcover EC Library. I haven't decided yet, because it would take some of the surprise out of getting the comics if I saw all the covers at once.

That's about all I have to say. Your main requests in the letter pages are "Subscribe!" and "We Want Letters!", and now I've done both.

Bobby Birkert

**CK mentioned the vide-worthy Vincent in his locol in CRYPT #3, now's my turn! Before we crow too loudly about beating Hollywood to the punch, bear in mind "House of Wax" was a remake of 1933's "Mystery of the Wax Museum," directed by Michael Curtiz. But, to compare, here's the peerless Price as "House"'s Henry Jarrod being unmasked alongside Craig's Julie Vendette in the same circumstance, from "Portrait in Wax!" in VAULT #1.**



**While we're on the subject, I've been catching up on movies released since my forced retirement, and can recommend the**

MORE ON NEXT PAGE

**work of Curtis Harrington, specifically in this connection his "Games" of 1967 starring the "Diaboliqua"—al Simons Signoret (Woo-wool).**

**For the 3rd part of a Price triple-play, see OW's locol in HAUNT #3 in about 30 days!**

**You are right, the EC covers are "overruns" from the ubiquitous EC Library. And, they're so cheap! I mean, they're so reasonably priced! Suitable for wallpapering your own little vault! Call or write for info. —VK**

Dear V-K,

I don't see why people compare your stories to the Crypt-Keeper's stories. They are all by the exact same artists and writers.

I have a question: If VAULT #1 actually printed the FIRST issue of VAULT, why does the Vault-Keeper say, "Ah, we meet AGAIN"? Also, when did Ghastly join EC?

Oliver Buckel
Erie, PA

**Why, Oliver, the tale is in the TELLING! And I'M the top tale-teller!**

**Truth be told, I told two tales (by the testers! By golly, I'm getting tongue-tied!) in the last few Pre-Trend comics; specifically, in WAR AGAINST CRIME #10 & #11. You can see those soon in Russ' Pre-Trend hardbacks (see above).**

**"Ghastly" Graham Ingels' 1st EC work was likely "Smokin' Six Guns" in WAR AGAINST CRIME #1 (1948). He did about 20 stories for the Pre-Trends. Of course, he was just plain Graham then. It wasn't till we GhouLunatics got 'hold of him he turned "Ghastly!" —VK**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Why don't you go to HBO and get your own show like the Crypt-Keeper? You might be good enough! You aren't my favorite host, but I have no favorite! I write to all hosts so don't worry. Are you friends with the Crypt-Keeper? I've always wondered about that.

Ricky Metza
Chicago, IL

**MIGHT be? Huh! —VK**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I subscribed to CRYPT a few months ago and VAULT just recently. I think your mag is the best. I am going to subscribe to HAUNT, too, but I think I'll still like VAULT the best.

I read your mag all the time. I love the artwork, especially by Graham Ingels. I am his biggest fan.

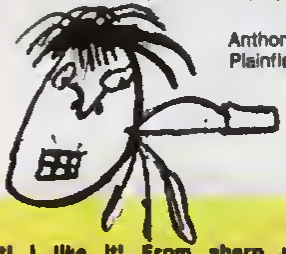
Speaking of fan, I would like to know if there are any fan clubs going to start. In VAULT #2 I read Glenn Weinrich's letter in VK's Corner asking about a Fan-Addict Club. You asked someone to step forward. I would like to know if Glenn would like to help me start one. If you would, Glenn, write to me.

Kevin Spann
5415 Cardinal
Little Rock, AR 72204

**See also the locol in CRYPT #3, already in release. —VK**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I love your gruesome tales. I've read only one issue of VAULT. I know I'll buy more. It's the best comic I've ever read. Although I'm not the best artist in the world, I drew a picture. I hope you will like it.



Anthony Bell
Plainfield, IN

**I like it! I like it! From sharp minds come...sharp knives! —VK**

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I want to know who wrote EC's stories in CRYPT, VAULT, and HAUNT. Was it the artists? At first, when I started collecting, I thought it was. Now, I am not sure.

I am your #1 fan.

Dan Kraut
Philadelphia, PA

**At last! My own little #1 fan!**

**The fact is, we're not set up to accurately list the authors of the EC stories, but we can easily (using the von Bernewitz "Checklist") list the artists. —VK**

**Also available this month are WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED TALES. Watch for HAUNT, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY and CRIME next month. Don't forget CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details)! Back issues are $1.50 each plus $2.00 per order for s&h ($3.00 outside US).**

**We want letters! Write to:**
**VAULT**
**RUSS COCHRAN**
**POB 468**
**WEST PLAINS MO 65775**

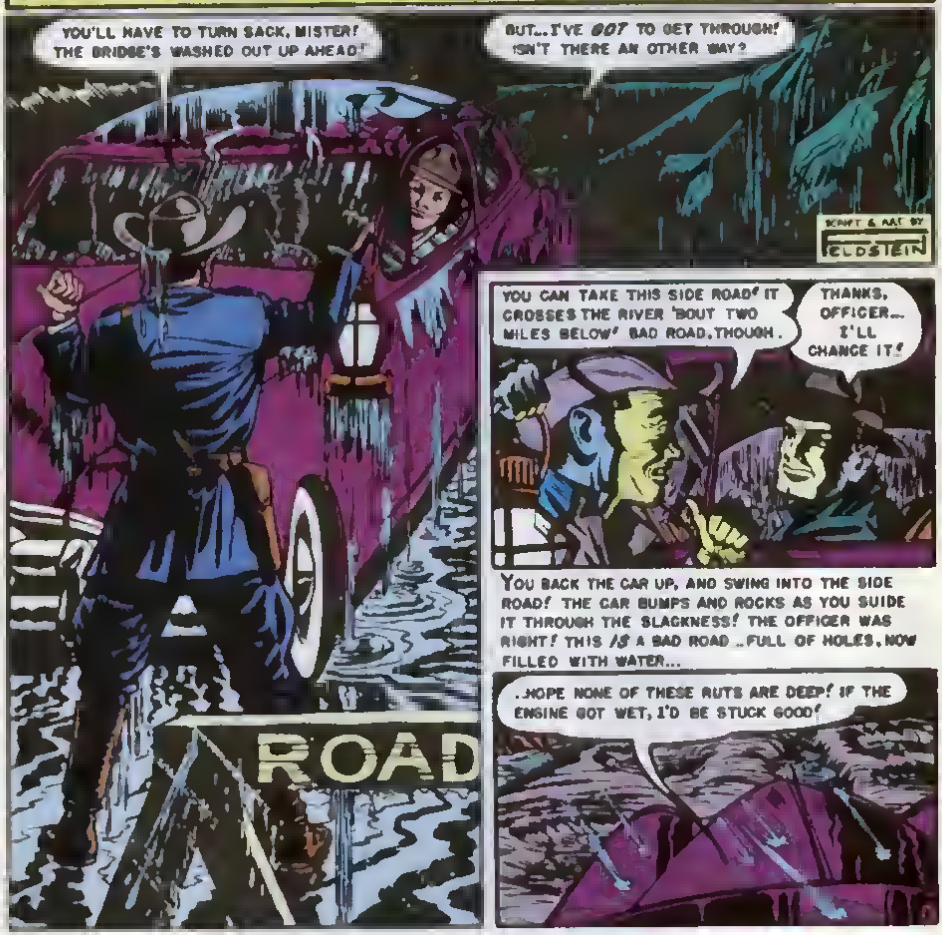
**THIS COMIC REPRINTS**
**VAULT OF HORROR "#14" (#3, AUG 1950)**

| | |
|---|---|
| "Voodoo Vengeance!" | Johnny Craig |
| "Werewolf" | Wally Wood |
| "Rats Have Sharp Teeth!" | Graham Ingels |
| "The Strange Couple!" | Al Feldstein |

THIS TALE IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES! I CALL IT...

# THE STRANGE COUPLE!

YOU HAVE BEEN DRIVING FOR TWO HOURS THROUGH THIS BLINDING DOWNPOUR! AT TIMES, YOU CAN HARDLY SEE THE ROAD AHEAD! HEADLIGHTS DON'T HELP! THEY ONLY REFLECT BACK FROM THE SHEETS OF DRIVING RAIN .. GIVING THE EERIE EFFECT THAT YOU ARE FOLLOWING A SOLID WALL OF WATER! WAIT... THERE'S A LIGHT UP AHEAD! IT'S MOVING UP AND DOWN! IT...IT'S A MAN STANDING IN THE ROAD... A STATE TROOPER... SIGNALING YOU TO STOP...




YOU BACK THE CAR UP, AND SWING INTO THE SIDE ROAD! THE CAR BUMPS AND ROCKS AS YOU GUIDE IT THROUGH THE BLACKNESS! THE OFFICER WAS RIGHT! THIS *IS* A BAD ROAD .. FULL OF HOLES, NOW FILLED WITH WATER...

YOU CONTINUE ON, SPLASHING AND ROLLING, FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE HOURS! YOU'RE TIRED NOW! THE STRAIN OF DRIVING IN THIS DREADFUL DOWNPOUR IS BEGINNING TO HAVE ITS EFFECT! SUDDENLY...

BLAST!

SPUT-T

THE ENGINE HAS STALLED! THAT LAST DITCH YOU WENT THROUGH PROBABLY WET THE WIRES! YOU'RE STUCK NOW... STUCK OUT IN THIS GOD-FORSAKEN SPOT!

WELL, THERE'S NO USE TRYING TO WALK ANYWHERE! THE RAIN IS TOO HEAVY FOR THAT...!

I MIGHT AS WELL MAKE MYSELF COMFORTABLE!... GOT TO WAIT FOR THIS BEASTLY STORM TO STOP.. TIRED ANYWAY. NO-HUM.. I'LL...

SUDDENLY YOU HIT BOLT UPRIGHT! A LIGHT SHINING THROUGH THE BLACK DOWNPOUR! FUNNY! YOU DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE! MAYBE IT'S A HOUSE! MAYBE

PERHAPS THEY HAVE A *PHONE*... NEED A MECHANIC TO FIX THE CAR!

YOU PULL YOUR COLLAR UP AROUND YOUR NECK, PULL YOUR HAT DOWN, AND MAKE A SNEAK FOR THE HOUSE

I HOPE THEY CAN PUT ME UP FOR THE... PANT... NIGHT! I'M... PANT... *HUNGRY*, TOO!

THE HOUSE IS OLD AND RUN DOWN! THE SHUTTERS ARE BROKEN, AND ARE CLATTERING AGAINST THE WINDOWS! ICY FINGERS SKIP YOUR SPINE AS YOU STAND BEFORE THE BATTERED DOOR! THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS HOUSE... SOMETHING FOREBODING...

OUGH... SUDDEN... THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS...

YOU KNOCK! THE HOLLOW BOOM ECHOES THROUGH THE INTERIOR... AND HEAVY SLOW FOOTSTEPS APPROACH THE DOOR! THE RUSTY HINGES SQUEAK AND STRAIN AS THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN...

GO AWAY... GO AWAY FROM HERE!

BUT THE STORM I... I...

YOU'RE FRIGHTENED! THE WOMAN HAS A WILD, ALMOST MANIACAL LOOK IN HER GLEAMING EYES! HER HOARSE WHISPER BURNS YOUR EARDRUMS...
YOU'RE NOT WANTED! IT'S DANGEROUS FOR YOU HERE! GO AWAY!
BUT MY CAR... IT'S STUCK DOWN THERE... I THOUGHT...
LET THE GENTLEMAN COME IN, HEPSIBAH! LET HIM COME IN! I WOULDN'T TURN AWAY A DOG ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS!
WHY... THANK YOU, SIR! I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD PUT ME UP...
GO, WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME...
YOU MUSTN'T MIND MY WIFE, SIR! SHE'S ... NOT WELL!
OH... I SEE!
THAT'S WHY WE LIVE OUT IN THIS DESERTED PLACE! I CAN KEEP MY EYE ON HER... TAKE CARE OF HER!
I... UNDERSTAND! DO YOU THINK I COULD ... SET SOMETHING TO EAT?
OF COURSE! WAIT HERE! I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE WINE CELLAR... AND BRING UP A BOTTLE OF MY BEST VINTAGE!
YOU SIT DOWN! YOU LOOK AROUND! THE WOMAN IS COWERING IN THE CORNER! HER BEADY EYES FOLLOW THE MAN AS HE DISAPPEARS INTO THE CELLAR! THEN SHE RUSHES TO YOU... CLAWING AT YOUR ARM...
PLEASE! I SEE OF YOU! GO! YOU ARE IN GREAT DANGER HERE! MY HUSBAND! HE IS INHUMAN!
INHUMAN?
MY HUSBAND... IS A VAMPIRE! THAT IS WHY YOU MUST LEAVE! TRUST ME! THAT BOTTLE HE'S SETTING... IT'S ALMOST EMPTY! IT'S NOT WINE! IT'S BLOOD!
GOOD LORD! THE WOMAN IS MAD!
3

THE FOOTSTEPS ON THE CELLAR STAIRS WARN THE OLD WOMAN OF MEN HUSBAND'S RETURN AND SHE SLIPS INTO THE SHADOWS BEYOND THE FIREPLACE..
AH...NERS WE ARE!
THE MAN PUTS THE BOTTLE ON THE TABLE..AND YOU STARE AT IT! IT IS ALMOST EMPTY, AND THE CONTENTS ARE A DEEP RED.. BLOOD RED..
YOU'LL JOIN ME, SIR?
I...I'D RATHER NOT!
HE JUMPS UP IN A FIT OF RAGE! HE RUSHES TO THE WOMAN WHO SITS HUDDLED IN THE DARKNESS
YOU'VE BEEN TALKING! GO UPSTAIRS TO YOUR ROOM! GO AHEAD!
YES, FATHER!
YOU CAN SEE THAT HE'S IRRITATED! HE RETURNS TO THE TABLE AND POURS A GLASS OF THE RED LIQUID FOR HIMSELF! HE DRINKS IT DOWN AND LICKS HIS LIPS! THEN HE LEANS TOWARD YOU.
I SEE THAT I MUST TELL YOU ABOUT MY WIFE! SHE IS INSANE! HOPELESSLY INSANE! BUT HER AFFLICTION IS WORSE THAN ANY FIEND COULD IMAGINE! MY WIFE...IS A GHOUL!
ICY FINGERS AGAIN CLOSE AROUND YOUR HEART AS THE MAN RELATES A STRANGE TALE!
WE HAD A DOG! ONE DAY, IT DIED! I TOOK THE POOR THING AND BURIED IT IN THE GARDEN BEHIND THE HOUSE! THAT NIGHT, I WAS AWAKENED BY THE SOUND OF A SPADE IN THE SOFT EARTH! I LOOKED OUT OF MY WINDOW
...IT WAS MY WIFE! SHE WAS DIGGING AT THE DOG'S GRAVE! I PUT ON MY ROBE! I WENT DOWNSTAIRS! SHE WAS GONE WHEN I GOT TO THE GARDEN, BUT THE DOG'S CORPSE WAS STILL THERE.. AND IT WAS PARTIALLY DEVOURED!
YOU SHUDDER! A FEELING OF NAUSEA SWEEPS OVER YOU! YOUR THROAT IS TIGHT AND DRY! THE MAN RISES..TAKES THE BOTTLE AND GOES DOWNSTAIRS TO THE CELLAR ONCE MORE! SUDDENLY YOU HEAR FOOTSTEPS BEHIND YOU! YOU TURN..
HE KILLED THE DOG! HE DRAINED ITS BLOOD! LOCK THE DOOR TO YOUR ROOM TONIGHT! I SEE YOU! LOCK THE DOOR..PROTECT YOURSELF.. I WANT YOU!
I...I WILL!
4

SHE SCURRIES UP THE STAIRS AS THE MAN RETURNS! HE HANDS YOU A KEY!
THIS IS A KEY TO THE CLOSET IN YOUR ROOM! LOCK IT TONIGHT! SHE CAN GET IN THAT WAY IF YOU DON'T COME.. I WILL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM!
YES! I I'M COMING!
HE OPENS THE DOOR TO A SMALL ROOM! THERE IS NO WINDOW..ONLY ONE OTHER DOOR! THE CLOSET!
GOOD RIGHT, SIR! REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU.. LOCK THE CLOSET WITH THAT KEY!
YES.. I WILL! I'LL REMEMBER!
HE IS GONE.. AND YOU ARE TERRIFIED! LORD, HOW YOU WISH YOU COULD RUN FROM THIS CURSED HOUSE.. BUT THE RAIN..YOU CAN HEAR IT PATTERING ON THE ROOF ABOVE.. WHERE CAN YOU GO..
I'LL BARRICADE MYSELF IN!
FIRST YOU LOCK THE CLOSET WITH THE KEY THE MAN GAVE YOU! THEN, YOU LOCK THE DOOR TO THE ROOM..
THAT BUREAU LOOKS HEAVY ENOUGH!
YOU PUSH THE HEAVY BUREAU UP AGAINST THE DOOR TO THE ROOM
THAT OUGHT TO DO IT! HE CAN'T MOVE THAT!
AND SHOVE THE BED UP AGAINST THE CLOSET DOOR
IF I LIE ON THE BED.. SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO PUSH IT OPEN!
NERVOUSLY, YOU LIE DOWN ON THE BED! YOU ARE TIRED BUT YOU DARE NOT SLEEP! WHOM CAN YOU BELIEVE? WHICH ONE IS TELLING THE TRUTH?
MAYBE.. MAYBE THIS IS ALL A HORRIBLE JOKE THEY ARE PLAYING
5

SUDDENLY YOUR BLOOD FREEZES IN YOUR VEINS! YOU SIT UP! A NOISE... FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE YOUR ROOM!
THE DOOR? IS IT THE MAN?
YOU TRY TO PEER INTO THE GLOOM! THE NOISE... AGAIN...
THE CLOSET? IS IT THE WOMAN?
THEN... A THIN PENCIL STRIPE OF LIGHT FALLS ACROSS THE ROOM
THE WALL... A PANEL IS OPENING
SHEER HORROR CLUTCHES AT YOUR POUNDING HEART... THE PANEL OPENS WIDER... WIDER... AND THEN...
NO! NO! IT'S BOTH OF THEM!
YOU BACK UP... BUT THERE'S NO PLACE TO GO! THE ROOM IS SMALL... THE DOORS BARRICADED... AND THE TWO OF THEM, THAT HORRIBLE COUPLE, ARE COMING AT AT YOU...
MY BOTTLE IS ALMOST EMPTY...
HURRY, FEDOR! FINISH QUICKLY... SO THAT I MAY FEAST...
YOU SCREAM... LOUDLY... WITH ALL THE STRENGTH YOU CAN MUSTER! YOU CLAW AGAINST THE WALL BEHIND YOU AND SCREAM...
A-A-A-A-H!

SUDDENLY THERE IS A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT AND YOU OPEN YOUR EYES...

GOOD LORD!

YOU ARE IN YOUR CAR... THE RAIN POUNDING ON THE METAL TOP...ECHOING IN YOUR BRAIN! YOU'RE WET WITH PERSPIRATION...AND SICK...

E...I MUST HAVE BEEN DREAMING!

YOU PRESS YOUR FOOT ON THE STARTER OF YOUR CAR! THERE IS NO SOUND!

...DEAD! THE WATER MUST HAVE SHORTED THE BATTERY!

YOU LOOK AROUND! A LIGHT... SHINING THROUGH THE DOWNPOUR! A HOUSE...

MAYBE THEY HAVE A PHONE! I COULD GET A MECHANIC...

YOU PULL YOUR COLLAR UP AROUND YOUR NECK, PULL YOUR HAT DOWN OVER YOUR EYES, AND BREAK FOR THE HOUSE...

IF THEY HAVE NO PHONE, AT LEAST THEY COULD PUT ME UP UNTIL MORNING!

THE HOUSE SEEMS STRANGELY FAMILIAR! RUN DOWN... CLATTERING SHUTTERS, SHATTERED DOOR! ALMOST LIKE THE HOUSE IN THAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE YOU JUST HAD...

BAH! IT WAS ONLY A DREAM!

FOOTSTEPS, SLOW AND HEAVY, APPROACH IN ANSWER TO YOUR FRANTIC HAMMERING! THE DOOR SQUEAKS OPEN...

GO AWAY! GO AWAY FROM HERE...BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

LET THE GENTLEMAN COME IN, HEPSIBAH! I WOULDN'T TURN AWAY A DOG ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS...

ONLY A DREAM? *WELL!* THEN WHAT ARE YOU FRIGHTENED OF? GO ON! *GO ON IN!*

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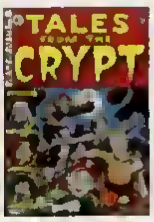

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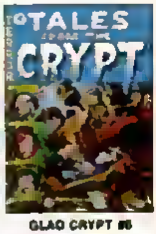

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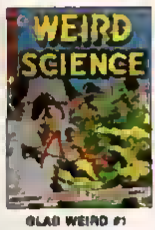

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